

# What to Eat and Drink When You're Sick

Cold and flu season can be rough, and sometimes even the best laid plans still end with a cold or the flu. When you're sick, try the tips in this strategy guide to help you feel better, ASAP!

## What to Drink

Clear fluids with a little bit of flavor are vital, whether you have a cold or the flu. It's important to stay hydrated. Try...

- Water (cold or hot) with lemon
- Low-sodium broth
- Herbal tea or decaffeinated green tea
  - Hot drinks tend to open congested airways more effectively than cold drinks.
- Watered-down 100% fruit juice
- Unflavored seltzer

If even those won't stay down, try plain water or ice chips.

## What Not to Drink

Hydrating with sugary drinks is often a mistake. Make sure that what you're drinking is low in sugar and sugar substitutes. Alcohol and caffeine can make dehydration worse, so skip drinks that contain either (or both!).

## What to Eat

When you feel that you can manage solids again, start with bland, nutritious foods like...



- Oatmeal
- Bananas
- Brown rice
- Applesauce
- Wheat toast
- Chicken soup -- this is especially good for a cold, since it seems to reduce most of the symptoms.

If you need to make up a calorie deficit, try healthful smoothies with plain yogurt, fresh fruit, and a little bit of milk or juice.

## What Not to Eat

When you're sick, certain foods can make things worse.

- It's possible that dairy products increase phlegm production and nausea, so steer clear until you feel ready.
- Avoid calorie-dense, nutrient-poor foods. You need all the nutrients you can get in order to get better, faster!

## A Word About Vitamins and Herbs

Research indicates that echinacea helps fight infections by stimulating the immune system. It can be taken as a strong tea, in pills, or as an extract. Echinacea offers immune support for both viral and bacterial infections.

Pregnant women should not take echinacea without consulting their doctors first.



Vitamin C, a natural antihistamine, has long been touted as an excellent cold fighter. The latest research indicates that vitamin C may decrease the length of a cold by about 1 day.